



Comox Valley
**FOOD POLICY
COUNCIL**

Year in Review

Fall 2024 Delegations

City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Comox Valley Regional
District, Village of Cumberland, School District 71

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is on the Unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



K'ómoks First Nation

Who We Are





Who We Are

- **Purpose:** Forum for advocacy & policy development for food system that is *ecologically sustainable, economically viable, socially just*
- **Structure:** Hybrid of civil society organizations and government (22 members)



How We Work

- Provide input to all municipal & regional governments
- Consider any matters which may be referred to the Policy Council by Councilors or staff
- May take positions on policy initiatives from other levels of government within the mandate of the Policy Council



Our Priorities: ongoing

1. **Support Local/Regional Policy & Planning Processes:** OCPs, Agricultural Plans, Regional Growth Strategy
2. **Advise on Food Policy Development, Engagement, Implementation:** For local/regional governments and



Our Priorities: updated annually

1. **Emergency Preparedness:** Support food security with focus on resilient supply chains and food economies
2. **Ecosystem Resilience:** Food systems lens to drought planning and advance water sustainability, climate resilience, ecosystem health
3. **School Food:** Access to healthy, local, culturally-appropriate school food
4. **Food Access & Agency:** Support household food security, poverty reduction and Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Our Work

Policy Support

- OCP Review, support *Food Systems Chapter*, Courtenay
- Support development urban agriculture policies, Courtenay,

Provincial Advocacy and Local Government Coalition Building

- Supported 3 municipalities & RD to send letters to Prime Minister to advocate for healthy school food program
- Supported municipalities to join the National Coalition for Healthy School Food
- Successfully advocated at provincial level for inclusion of food security in emergency planning
- Support signing onto *Island Food Charter*, City of Courtenay



2023-2024 Priority area : Emergency Planning

Priority:

Strengthening the local food economy, increasing local food storage/processing infrastructure, understanding/gathering baseline data re: food-security, assets and flows so proper planning can occur. Supporting regenerative food growing practices and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

Actions achieved:

1. Presented to the 2023 Provincial Committee of Finance regarding the need for mapping food flows and storage assets in the case of emergency. Developed Project plan.
2. Ministry of Agriculture announced funding for food security and emergencies for the first time in the 2023 budget.
3. Presentation to the North Island Regional Emergency Planners and Managers re: importance of mapping food assets and flows on Vancouver Island should ports or main transportation routes be damaged. Group passed a motion to discuss ways to support.
4. CVRD Agricultural Plan (CVAP) 2024 update includes Emergency Planning as one of 4 main topics.
5. Received funding for Emergency Mapping Project: Application submitted to Investment Agriculture Foundation through CVRD. Project to begin in late 2024, aims to map food flows and community food storage assets in the Comox Valley and Northern Island Communities to inform emergency planning.

Gaps: Local food storage/processing (ie local feed grain reserve)

2023-2024 Priority Area: School Food

Priority:

1. Support SD 71 in the development of ongoing, sustainable school food programs that support local producers, encourage healthy food, incorporate Indigenous knowledge, and prioritize food literacy and sustainability.
2. Advocate for national, universal school food programs.

Actions achieved:

1. Sent letters to MPs & MLAs regarding school food and requesting that MPs & MLAs tour local programs.
2. Advocacy efforts across the province (including by the CVFPC) resulted in a windfall of funding for long-term school food programs (Feeding Futures Funding includes almost 1.2 million for SD 71) in 2023.
3. Shared best practice resources and provided feedback to SD 71 BOE regarding Draft Feeding Futures recommendations.
4. SD 71 took CVFPC feedback into consideration and passed a motion to hire a FTE Food Services Coordinator as well as establish a Feeding Futures Advisory Board. The CVFPC Plans to express interest in joining the Advisory Board.
5. Submitted federal petitions to local MPs, resulting NDPs calling for school food funding in Budget 2024 in a press conference at LUSH HQ, where Maurita spoke to the importance of federal support for School Food programming.
6. The federal government announced that Budget 2024 will include funding for new National School Food Program! With an investment of \$1 billion over five years, the Program will launch with a target of providing meals to 400,000 more kids every year.

Gaps: Ensuring a collaboration of voices and best practices in SD 71 Feeding Futures program development and implementation; Development of strong food systems education policy for the District

2023-2024 Priority Area: Poverty Reduction

Priority:

Supporting and advocating for policy development relating to food access and poverty in a stigma-free way.

Actions Achieved:

1. Acting as an official partner of the Community Health Network
2. Participating in the advocacy circle for the CVRD Poverty Reduction Strategy
 - a. Employing a collective Impact approach to implementation
3. Members joined Tamarack's Western Canada Leads project, sitting on the Community of Practice and Leadership Roundtable. Through this project, the Comox Valley is one of ten communities in western Canada working toward a 5% reduction of people living in poverty.

Gaps: Capacity issues; lack of representation from the sector in the group

2023-2024 Priority Area #4: Local Food Procurement

Priority:

Developing local food procurement policy for institutions; supporting local municipal councils and the Regional District board in adopting local food procurement policy.

Actions Achieved:

1. Compiling Local Food Procurement policies and resources, drafting policy recommendations
 - a. We have run into some capacity barriers here: this action is on hold
2. Coached 5 other Food Policy Councils to get started
3. Working to create a Food Policy Council template for other municipalities/regions
4. Assisted the Town of Comox to explore incorporating local food procurement policies

Gaps: Capacity issues with compiling Local Food Procurement resources and recommendations

Some Big Wins to Celebrate

- Recognized provincially, nationally & internationally for COVID response
- Advocated for a new Agriculture Area Plan with the CVRD in 2020 (started in 2022)
- Advocated for a new Agriculture role within the CVRD (started in 2022)
- Created resolutions on Emergency Planning and Food Security through the CVRD reach UBCM and the province (2021) in the 2023 Ministry of Agriculture budget
- CVRD Emergency Management recognized Food Security as a priority area
- Provided feedback on the Food Systems Chapter of the City of Courtenay's OCP (bees, chickens, yard gates)
- Supported Regional Districts and all Municipalities in joining the Coalition for Healthy School Food in 2022
- Ministry of Education announced \$214 million of funding for school food programs over 3 years in 2023
- Presented to the Provincial Budget Commission (2020, 2021, 2022), regarding water on farms and emergency planning food asset mapping
- Coached 5 other Food Policy Councils to get started
- Consulted with the Town of Comox Planning department on development from a food security perspective
- Supported municipalities to sign the Island Food Charter: City of Courtenay in 2020, Village of Cumberland in 2023, and provided Charter to Town of Comox OCP consultants as a supporting document for OCP review
- Supported SD 71 to develop school food policies and advised on Feeding Futures Recommendations, including hiring a full-time School Food Coordinator and Advisory Committee
- Advocated for School Food Program funding in Budget 2024, resulting in an NDP call to federal leaders and a federal commitment of \$1 billion over 5 years to a National School Food Program

Thank You!